
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Local Media in the Power Vortex of PIK 2: A Hierarchy of Influences Analysis

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| ABSTRACT

The development of Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) on the northern coast of Banten as a National Strategic Project (PSN) has generated various social and environmental concerns, particularly among traditional fishing communities. In this context, local media serve as an important space for articulating public grievances, aspirations, and interests. This study critically examines the news production process surrounding the PIK 2 megaproject in two local newspapers, Banten Pos and Radar Banten, using the Hierarchy of Influences (HoI) framework. This study adopts a critical paradigm with a qualitative approach and a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five informants consisting of editors-in-chief/media leaders, editors, and journalists. In addition, document analysis of PIK 2 news archives published between 2020 and 2024 was used as supporting data. The collected data were analyzed thematically based on the five levels of the HoI framework. Data trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. The findings show that, at the individual level, journalists' professional experience, along with their geographical and social proximity to coastal issues, strengthened their sensitivity in reporting. At the media routines level, there was a constant negotiation between the demand for rapid daily news production and the need for more in-depth investigative reporting. At the organizational level, gatekeeping was carried out rigorously to anticipate legal risks and potential social tensions. At the extra-media level, external pressure did not appear in the form of overt censorship, but operated through soft pressure that encouraged newsrooms to exercise greater caution in assessing reporting risks. At the ideological level, local media had to engage with a developmentalist discourse that emphasized investment and economic growth. Nevertheless, Banten Pos and Radar Banten continued to provide space for the voices of fishermen and affected coastal communities. This study concludes that local journalistic practices in Banten are shaped by the tension between professional idealism, the media's social control function, and strong structural constraints rooted in local economic and political relations.

| KEYWORDS

local media, PIK 2, Hierarchy of Influences, investigative journalism, critical communication.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The development of Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) on the northern coast of Banten, particularly in Tangerang Regency, reflects a strong national development orientation centered on investment, urban expansion, and economic growth. Several studies have linked the development of this area to the National Strategic Project (PSN) agenda. PIK 2 is projected as a new growth center that integrates residential, commercial, tourism, and various economic support facilities (Abdurrahman & Wanusmawatie, 2025; Siregar & Roestamy, 2024). The narrative surrounding this development generally highlights physical modernization, job creation, and increased investment attractiveness as key indicators of progress.

At the same time, large-scale coastal development cannot be separated from the social and ecological issues that accompany it. Studies on PIK 2 show that the project is not merely related to spatial transformation. Other issues have also emerged, including potential damage to coastal ecosystems, threats to mangrove areas, changes in land-use functions, and the possible loss of local livelihoods (Fauziah et al., 2025; Nugroho et al., 2024). In the context of reclamation and coastal development, landscape change should not be understood only as a technical matter. Coastal space carries ecological, economic, social, and cultural functions for communities that have long depended on it for their livelihoods.

The social impacts of coastal development are most clearly experienced by traditional fishers and local residents living around the project area. Changes in access to fishing grounds, increasing pressure on coastal resources, and the narrowing of community living spaces indicate that the benefits of development are not always distributed evenly (Palilingan, 2024). From the perspective of the political economy of space, this condition can be read as a shift in public space and community living space into an exclusive economic zone that is more easily controlled by actors with large capital. This phenomenon is in line with the idea of accumulation by dispossession, in which capital expansion requires the appropriation or control of spaces that previously served social functions for local communities (Harvey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991).

This issue becomes even more important because development often takes place within unequal power relations. Affected communities do not always have an equal bargaining position in the planning, implementation, or evaluation of development policies. In many cases, public participation may even stop at the level of tokenism. Communities are formally involved, yet they are not granted substantive authority to influence decision-making processes (Arnstein, 1969). In the context of PIK 2, several studies emphasize the need for development that is more inclusive, transparent, and community-oriented. Strategic projects should not only benefit the state and corporations, but also protect the rights and long-term sustainability of local communities (Abdurrahman & Wanusmawatie, 2025; Nugroho et al., 2024).

Amid this contestation of interests, mass media play an important role in shaping public understanding of development projects. The media do not function merely as channels of information. They also serve as arenas for the production of meaning, where narratives of development, conflict, the environment, investment, and public interest intersect. Through issue selection, angle construction, source selection, and the emphasis placed on particular aspects of a story, the media help shape the public agenda and determine which issues deserve public attention (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). News coverage of PIK 2, therefore, cannot be viewed as a neutral reflection of reality. It is a socially constructed product shaped by values, interests, routines, and specific structures of power (Couldry, 2012; Hall, 1980).

In this context, local media occupy a position that differs from national media. Local media are geographically, socially, and emotionally closer to communities directly affected by development policies. This proximity provides local media with an opportunity to capture community voices, present the experiences of marginalized groups, and monitor power practices at the regional level (Mota, 2023). Yet this closeness can also make local media more vulnerable. They operate within a relatively narrow political-economic ecosystem. Relations with local governments, advertisers, local elites, and business actors may influence editorial courage. Local journalism in strategic development issues, therefore, needs to be understood as a practice that continuously negotiates professional idealism, public interest, and structural pressure.

In Banten, Banten Pos and Radar Banten are two local media outlets that are relevant to examine. Both operate close to the socio-political dynamics surrounding the development of PIK 2. These two media outlets do not only report the project as a development agenda, but also cover the issues that accompany it, including impacts on fishers, coastal spatial conflicts, government policies, and the responses of affected communities. Their position is significant because local news coverage can function as a channel for articulating public interests. At the same time, it also becomes an arena where development narratives and social criticism are negotiated.

Several previous studies have examined PIK 2 from the perspectives of public policy, law, the environment, and sustainable development. Nugroho et al. (2024) analyzed the development policy of PIK 2 and highlighted the importance of a more inclusive approach in policy formulation. Siregar and Roestamy (2024) examined PIK 2 from the perspective of law and the state's right to control land. Fauziah et al. (2025) emphasized the legal and environmental consequences of PIK 2 development in Tangerang. Media studies have also begun to emerge, although they still tend to focus on framing analysis of online news coverage. One example is the study by Irwansyah et al. (2025), which examined Tempo.co's coverage of the PIK 2 controversy. While these studies are important, few have explored in depth how news about PIK 2 is produced within local newsrooms.

This gap points to the need for a study that does not merely examine news content, but also traces the news production process and the layers of influence behind it. Textual analysis can show how an issue is framed. However, it is not sufficient to explain why certain angles are selected, how editorial decisions are made, what pressures journalists face, and how local media maintain their social control function when dealing with a large-scale development project. This study employs the Hierarchy of Influences (HoI) theory developed by Shoemaker and Reese. This theory views media content as the result of interactions among multiple levels of influence, ranging from individual journalists, media routines, and media organizations to extra-media factors and dominant ideologies in society (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

Based on this background, this study aims to critically analyze the dynamics of news production on the PIK 2 project in Banten Pos and Radar Banten through the perspective of the Hierarchy of Influences. The study seeks to explain how journalists' experiences, newsroom routines, organizational policies, external pressures, and ideological discourses of development shape the direction and depth of local media coverage. This study is expected to contribute to the fields of local journalism, development communication, and the political economy of media, particularly in understanding how local media exercise their social control function amid the power vortex surrounding strategic development projects.

2. Literature Review

This study is grounded in the tradition of critical communication studies, which views the media not merely as channels for transmitting information, but also as arenas where meaning is produced, interests are contested, and power is negotiated. From this perspective, news is not understood as a neutral reflection of reality. Rather, it is a social construction shaped through processes of selection, interpretation, emphasis, and framing (Hall, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). News coverage of a large-scale development project such as Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) therefore needs to be examined in relation to journalistic practices, media structures, political-economic pressures, and the ideology of development operating within the public sphere.

2.1 Local Media, Development, and Coastal Spatial Conflicts

Local media occupy an important position in regional public communication systems because they operate close to the lived experiences of local communities. Their geographical, social, and cultural proximity enables them to capture issues that are often overlooked by national media, particularly those related to grassroots communities, regional policies, and local social conflicts (Franklin, 2006; Hess & Waller, 2017; Mota, 2023). In the context of development, local media do not only disseminate policy information. They also shape how communities understand the direction, benefits, and risks of development.

Coastal development is a complex issue because it brings together the interests of the state, corporations, local communities, and the environment within the same space. Coastal areas cannot be positioned as empty spaces that are simply available for investment. They carry ecological, economic, social, and cultural functions for fishing communities and coastal residents (Alongi, 2008; Bennett et al., 2019; Lefebvre, 1991). When large-scale development projects enter coastal areas, the relationship between people, space, resources, and power also changes. Such changes often generate issues of access, benefit distribution, environmental sustainability, and social justice (Harvey, 2005; McCarthy & Robinson, 2016).

In the case of PIK 2, various studies have examined the project from the perspectives of public policy, law, the environment, and sustainable development. Nugroho et al. (2024) emphasize the need for a more inclusive and community-oriented development approach. Siregar and Roestamy (2024) examine PIK 2 in relation to the state's right to control land

and the legal legitimacy of development. Fauziah et al. (2025) highlight the legal and environmental consequences of PIK 2 development in Tangerang. These studies show that PIK 2 is not merely a physical development project. It is also an arena of competing interests involving the state, capital, coastal communities, and the environment.

In such a situation, local media play a strategic role in connecting the experiences of affected communities with the broader public discourse. Local media can provide alternative narratives to development discourses that place excessive emphasis on investment, modernization, and economic growth. At the same time, however, local media also occupy a vulnerable position because they operate within a political-economic ecosystem that is closely linked to local governments, advertisers, local elites, and business actors. This condition places local media in a constant tension between their social control function and the need to maintain institutional sustainability (Curran, 2011; McQuail, 2010; Picard, 2011).

2.2 Investigative Journalism and the Social Control Function of Local Media

Investigative journalism is a journalistic practice that emphasizes factual depth, the exposure of hidden problems, and advocacy for the public interest. This practice is particularly important in development issues because large-scale projects often involve unequal power relations, limited access to information, and the potential neglect of affected groups (De Burgh, 2008; Ettema & Glasser, 1998). In the context of coastal development, investigative journalism serves to trace socio-ecological impacts, scrutinize official claims made by governments and developers, and open space for the voices of marginalized communities.

Local media have both opportunities and limitations in carrying out investigative journalism. Their opportunities stem from their proximity to the location of events, their social networks with local communities, and their more detailed understanding of regional contexts. Yet their limitations are also significant. Deadline pressures, limited newsroom resources, dependence on advertising, and close socio-political relations with local actors can affect the room for journalistic maneuver (Franklin, 2006; Harcup, 2014; Hess & Waller, 2017). Under these conditions, investigative reporting in local media does not always appear as a complete long-form report. More often, it is developed gradually through a sequence of daily news stories, follow-up reports, and incremental issue deepening.

In the coverage of PIK 2, the investigative function of local media becomes important because the project is linked to impacts on fishers, coastal living spaces, government policies, developers' interests, and environmental issues. Local media cannot simply report the project as a development agenda. They also need to examine who benefits, who is affected, how coastal space changes, and how community voices are positioned in news coverage. In this context, investigative journalism should not be understood merely as a reporting technique. It also functions as a practice of social control over development that is shaped by multiple interests.

2.3 News Production, Gatekeeping, and the Political Economy of Media

News production involves processes of selection, editing, framing, and editorial decision-making. News does not emerge solely from events in the field. It is shaped through interactions among journalists, editors, editors-in-chief, organizational policies, sources, and the socio-political context in which media institutions operate (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014; Tuchman, 1978). Within this process, gatekeeping becomes a crucial mechanism. It determines which information is considered newsworthy, how issues are organized, which sources are selected, and which angles are emphasized (McQuail, 2010; White, 1950).

In local media, gatekeeping often takes place in a more sensitive setting. The media, local governments, advertisers, and business actors operate within a relatively close social space. Editorial decisions are therefore not determined solely by news values. Newsrooms must also consider legal risks, the possibility of external pressure, institutional relationships, and the economic sustainability of the media organization. From the perspective of the political economy of media, news content cannot be separated from ownership structures, sources of revenue, media markets, and relations of power (McChesney, 2004; Mosco, 2009; Picard, 2011). Coverage of a major development project such as PIK 2 therefore needs to be analyzed not only through the news text, but also through the production process and the structural relations surrounding it.

The political economy framework helps explain the dilemmas often faced by local media. On the one hand, the media have a professional mandate to provide accurate and critical information that serves the public interest. On the other hand,

the media are also economic institutions that require resources, advertising revenue, access to sources, and stable institutional relationships. In such circumstances, media criticism of powerful actors does not necessarily disappear. It may instead be adjusted through word choice, publication timing, the intensity of coverage, or the decision to delay further investigation until the data and risks are considered more manageable.

2.4 The Hierarchy of Influences Theory as an Analytical Framework

The Hierarchy of Influences (HoI) theory developed by Shoemaker and Reese provides an analytical framework for understanding how media content is shaped by multiple levels of influence operating simultaneously. This theory rejects the assumption that news content is determined entirely by the will of individual journalists. Instead, HoI views news as the result of interactions among individual factors, media routines, media organizations, extra-media factors, and ideology (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, 2014). This framework is relevant for analyzing the production of PIK 2 news because the issue involves journalistic complexity, organizational dynamics, external pressures, and development discourse.

At the individual level, news content is influenced by journalists' backgrounds, professional experience, personal values, ethical orientation, and proximity to the issues they cover. In the context of local media, geographical and social proximity can shape journalists' sensitivity to the problems faced by local communities (Hanitzsch, 2007; Hess & Waller, 2017). Journalists who are accustomed to covering social, agrarian, environmental, and development conflict issues tend to be more sensitive to the impacts of projects on vulnerable groups. At this level, journalists do not merely act as recorders of facts. They also become actors who interpret realities in the field.

At the media routines level, news content is shaped by daily newsroom practices, including deadlines, task distribution, writing standards, news values, and the demand for actuality. Media routines help newsrooms work efficiently. Yet the same routines may also limit the depth of reporting, especially when an issue requires lengthy verification and investigative work (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017; Tuchman, 1978). In the case of PIK 2, media routines help explain why in-depth reporting is often developed gradually through daily news stories and follow-up reports.

At the organizational level, news content is influenced by newsroom structures, authority hierarchies, editorial policies, editing mechanisms, and decisions regarding publication worthiness. Editors and editors-in-chief play an important role in checking data, assessing risks, determining angles, and ensuring that news remains consistent with the principles of accuracy and balance (McQuail, 2010; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). In a sensitive issue such as PIK 2, the media organization becomes a space of negotiation between journalistic idealism, public interest, institutional security, and potential legal risks.

At the extra-media level, news content is influenced by actors and pressures outside the media organization, including local governments, developers, advertisers, interest groups, official sources, and public opinion. Extra-media influence does not always appear as overt censorship. Pressure often operates more subtly through access to information, institutional relations, informal objections, economic dependence, or editorial risk calculations (Curran, 2011; McChesney, 2004; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This concept is important for understanding how local media can continue to report on PIK 2, although with a certain degree of caution in language choice, publication timing, and the depth of criticism.

At the ideological level, news content is shaped by dominant values and worldviews within society. In the context of development, developmentalism often positions economic growth, investment, modernization, and infrastructure as the main indicators of progress (Harvey, 2005; McMichael, 2017). The media may reproduce this ideology when news coverage places greater emphasis on economic and investment benefits. However, the media can also negotiate or challenge it by presenting the voices of affected communities, issues of spatial justice, and the ecological consequences of development (Hall, 1980; Servaes, 2008).

2.5 Development Ideology and Media Narratives

Development ideology is an important aspect of news coverage on strategic projects. It determines how development is understood, who is positioned as the subject of development, and which impacts are given space in public discourse. In many official narratives, development is often framed as rational, modern, and inevitable. Such narratives usually prioritize investment, infrastructure, economic growth, and regional competitiveness. Meanwhile, socio-ecological impacts on vulnerable groups are often treated as secondary consequences (Harvey, 2005; McMichael, 2017).

The media play an important role in either reproducing or challenging development ideology. Through source selection, issue emphasis, diction, and framing, the media may reinforce dominant development narratives or open space for alternative discourses (Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Hall, 1980). In the coverage of PIK 2, development ideology can be seen in how the media position the project: as a symbol of economic progress, as a source of spatial conflict, or as an arena of negotiation between investment and the interests of affected communities.

Local media occupy an interesting position in this context. On the one hand, they may participate in amplifying development narratives promoted by the government and developers. On the other hand, their proximity to affected communities gives them the opportunity to bring the experiences of fishers, coastal residents, and marginalized groups into the public sphere. Ideological analysis in this study therefore does not simply ask whether the media support or oppose development. The more important question is how the media negotiate development narratives through their social control function.

2.6 Previous Studies and Research Gap

A number of previous studies provide an important foundation for this research. Studies on PIK 2 from policy and legal perspectives have highlighted issues of development legitimacy, environmental impacts, and the need for a more inclusive approach (Fauziah et al., 2025; Nugroho et al., 2024; Siregar & Roestamy, 2024). Media framing studies on PIK 2 have also begun to develop. Irwansyah et al. (2025), for example, analyzed Tempo.co's coverage of the PIK 2 controversy. The study shows that media coverage can highlight social inequality, environmental degradation, and spatial conflict, although criticism of the government still tends to be expressed cautiously.

Most existing studies, however, still focus on policy, legal, environmental, or textual aspects of news coverage. Framing studies are indeed able to explain how an issue is framed in the news. Yet this approach does not fully explain how news is produced, how editorial decisions are made, what pressures the media face, and how local media negotiate their social control function within local power relations. It is at this point that the present study positions its contribution.

This study fills this gap by analyzing the production of PIK 2 news through the Hierarchy of Influences framework in a layered manner. The focus of the study is not limited to news content, but also includes journalists' work processes, newsroom routines, organizational mechanisms, extra-media pressures, and the development ideology that shapes news coverage. This study is expected to contribute to the fields of local journalism, development communication, and the political economy of media, particularly in understanding how local media exercise their social control function amid the power vortex surrounding a strategic development project.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of news production concerning the Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) project in local media, including newsroom work processes, editorial considerations, and power relations that shape journalistic practices. A case study design was used because the research focused on a specific context, namely the coverage of the PIK 2 project by two local media outlets in Banten Province.

The objects of this study were Banten Pos and Radar Banten. These two media outlets were selected because they occupy an important position within the local news ecosystem in Banten and have consistently reported on PIK 2 as an issue related to coastal development, community living spaces, government policy, and local political-economic interests. Their selection was based not only on their geographical proximity to the PIK 2 issue, but also on their role in shaping and distributing public discourse at the regional level.

The research informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the reporting, editing, and editorial decision-making processes related to PIK 2 coverage. This study involved five informants consisting of editors-in-chief/media leaders, editors, and journalists from Banten Pos and Radar Banten. The informants were Aditya Ramadhan, Editor-in-Chief of Radar Banten; Aas Arbie, Editor of Radar Banten; Chandra Magga, Media Leader of Banten Pos; Diebaj Ghuroofie, Editor/Journalist of Banten Pos; and M. Mulyadi, Journalist of Radar Banten. This composition of informants

was selected to capture different layers of the news production process, ranging from field reporting and manuscript editing to the formulation of editorial policy.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The in-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to explore the informants' experiences, perspectives, editorial considerations, reporting strategies, and the pressures they encountered in the process of reporting on PIK 2. The interviews were guided by the five levels of the Hierarchy of Influences theory, namely the individual level, media routines, media organization, extra-media factors, and ideology. In this way, the interviews did not only explore the personal experiences of journalists, but also traced newsroom mechanisms, gatekeeping processes, external pressures, and the ways in which the media interpreted the development narrative.

Document analysis was conducted on news archives, editorials, in-depth reports, and other journalistic products related to the PIK 2 project. The documents analyzed covered the period from 2020 to 2024. This analysis was used to identify patterns of coverage, narrative tendencies, issue selection, actor representation, and shifts in framing within PIK 2 news coverage. The documentary data also served as a point of comparison with the interview findings, so that the analysis did not rely solely on informants' statements but was also supported by written evidence from the journalistic products of both media outlets.

The data were analyzed using an interactive model of analysis consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This process was combined with thematic analysis. Data obtained from interviews and document analysis were classified according to the five levels of the Hierarchy of Influences theory: the individual level, media routines, media organization, extra-media factors, and ideology. After being categorized, the data were critically analyzed to examine how journalists' experiences, newsroom routines, organizational policies, external pressures, and development discourse shaped the direction and depth of PIK 2 coverage.

Data trustworthiness was maintained through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from informants holding different positions within the media organization, namely editors-in-chief/media leaders, editors, and journalists. Methodological triangulation was carried out by comparing interview findings with the results of document analysis. Through this strategy, the study sought to ensure that the interpretation was not based on a single perspective, but was constructed through comparison across relevant sources and types of data.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings show that the production of news on the Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) project in Banten Pos and Radar Banten did not take place as a neutral or straightforward journalistic process. News about PIK 2 emerged from the interaction between journalists' experiences, newsroom routines, organizational policies, external pressures, and development ideology operating within the local socio-political context. Using the Hierarchy of Influences framework, this section explains how these five levels of influence shaped the direction, depth, and limits of criticism in PIK 2 coverage. This framework is relevant because media content is shaped not only by the choices of individual journalists, but also by professional routines, organizational structures, pressures from outside the media, and dominant values within society (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

4.1 Individual Dimension: Journalists' Experience and Proximity to Coastal Issues

At the individual level, the findings indicate that journalists' professional experience and their proximity to coastal issues became the initial factors shaping the direction of PIK 2 coverage. Journalists who were accustomed to reporting on development issues, social conflicts, environmental concerns, and public policy tended to have stronger sensitivity in reading the project's impact on coastal communities. PIK 2 was not viewed merely as an investment project or a new urban development area, but also as a public issue related to fishers' living spaces, access to the sea, ecosystem change, and unequal power relations among the state, corporations, and affected communities.

This finding is consistent with Shoemaker and Reese's (2014) view that journalists are active actors in the news production process. Journalists do not merely record events. They also bring professional experience, values, social backgrounds, and personal judgments when identifying issues, selecting sources, and constructing news angles. In the

context of local media, geographical and social proximity further strengthens journalists' sensitivity to local community issues (Hanitzsch, 2007; Hess & Waller, 2017).

Field data show that PIK 2 coverage developed from journalists' sensitivity to community grievances. One informant stated:

"PIK 2 coverage did not begin as a special assignment. It started from issues that emerged in the field, especially complaints from local communities that we heard directly. Some residents expressed anxiety, there were issues of access, and changes in coastal community activities had also begun to be felt. From there, we saw that this issue could not be treated as an ordinary event" (Informant 5, interview, December 23, 2025).

This statement shows that field experience and social proximity enabled journalists to recognize PIK 2 as an issue of public importance. Proximity did not function only as a news value, but also became the basis of journalists' social sensitivity in reading the impacts of development. Thus, at the individual level, the construction of PIK 2 coverage began with journalists' ability to connect field facts with a broader social context.

The closeness of local media to affected communities also influenced source selection. Journalists did not rely solely on official sources from the government or developers. They also brought forward the voices of fishers, coastal residents, and affected groups. This choice is important because development narratives produced by formal actors often emphasize investment, economic growth, and modernization, while the lived experiences of affected communities may be pushed to the margins of public discourse. In this context, local media function as a space of articulation for groups whose positions are less dominant within the structure of development communication.

4.2 Media Routines: Negotiating Speed and Depth in Reporting

At the level of media routines, the findings reveal a tension between the demand for rapid news production and the need for deeper investigative reporting. Local media operate within a daily rhythm that requires actuality, especially when the PIK 2 issue develops quickly in the public sphere. However, as a sensitive issue involving communities, government, developers, and political-economic interests, PIK 2 also requires layered verification and deeper data collection.

Media routines organize how journalists work, from information gathering, source selection, news writing, and editing to publication. Tuchman (1978) describes media routines as mechanisms that allow social reality to be processed efficiently into news. However, these routines may also limit the depth of coverage, especially on issues that require long-term investigation. In local journalism, limited time, newsroom resources, and the demand for actuality often become obstacles to sustained investigative reporting (Franklin, 2006; Harcup, 2014; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017).

The findings show that PIK 2 coverage did not always appear immediately as a complete investigative report. Newsrooms tended to develop coverage gradually. Initial facts that had been confirmed were published first, while deeper reporting followed when additional data, sources, and confirmations became stronger. One informant explained:

"Speed is important, but if the data are not yet strong, we prefer to hold the story or publish it gradually. Especially for an issue such as PIK 2, confirmation must be clear so that the news does not create misleading interpretations" (Informant 2, interview, December 21, 2025).

This statement shows that media routines did not only operate as pressure, but also as a mechanism of control. The newsroom sought to keep PIK 2 coverage timely, without making it speculative. In this sense, media routines shaped a gradual pattern of reporting: responsive to current issues, yet still allowing room for deeper reporting once sufficient data were available.

This pattern indicates that the investigative function of local media does not always appear in the form of a long-form report from the outset. In the case of PIK 2, investigation was more often built through the accumulation of daily news stories, further confirmation, and gradual issue development. This strategy became a form of local media adaptation in maintaining a balance between actuality, accuracy, balance, and editorial caution.

4.3 Organizational Level: Gatekeeping and Editorial Negotiation

At the organizational level, the findings show that the production of PIK 2 news was strongly influenced by gatekeeping mechanisms carried out by editors and editors-in-chief. News obtained by journalists in the field was not published directly. It went through processes of data checking, language editing, balance assessment, legal risk evaluation, and consideration of social impacts. In a sensitive issue such as PIK 2, gatekeeping did not merely function as a mechanism for selecting news values, but also as an instrument of risk mitigation.

Theoretically, gatekeeping refers to the selection process that determines which events are considered newsworthy and how they are presented to the public (White, 1950). In media organizations, this process is not carried out only by journalists, but also by editors and editors-in-chief who hold authority in determining newsworthiness (McQuail, 2010; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). In local media, gatekeeping becomes more complex because newsrooms operate within a social space close to local governments, developers, advertisers, and readers.

One informant explained that the newsroom did not reject critical reporting, but required strong data and adequate verification:

"We always remind journalists and editors not to jump to conclusions. The PIK 2 issue is sensitive because it involves many interests, including the community, the government, and the developer. For that reason, every piece of information must be checked gradually and based on facts. Our principle is that news may be critical, but it must remain accurate, balanced, and accountable" (Informant 1, interview, December 19, 2025).

This statement shows that gatekeeping worked as a mechanism of quality control as well as institutional protection. The newsroom continued to provide space for criticism of the PIK 2 project, but such criticism had to be built on strong data. In this case, the media organization became a space of negotiation between journalistic idealism, the principle of balance, legal risk, and external pressure.

At the organizational level, editorial policy was shaped not only by the actuality of the issue, but also by its social impact. The newsroom needed to assess whether PIK 2 should be reported merely as a development project or developed further as a public issue related to spatial conflict, social inequality, and the interests of coastal communities. Thus, gatekeeping did not simply restrict news. It also determined the depth of coverage, the direction of criticism, and the form of local media's social responsibility.

4.4 Extra-Media Factors: Soft Pressure and Risk Calculation

At the extra-media level, the findings show that pressure on local media in reporting PIK 2 did not always appear in the form of open censorship or direct prohibition. More often, pressure emerged subtly through institutional relations, limited access to information, legal risks, relations with local government, relations with developers, and economic considerations within the media. This form of pressure can be understood as soft pressure.

In the Hierarchy of Influences framework, extra-media factors include actors and structures outside the media organization that influence news content, such as government, advertisers, interest groups, news sources, and political-economic forces (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). From the perspective of the political economy of media, such pressures often operate indirectly through economic dependence, access to information, institutional relations, and the need to maintain media sustainability (Curran, 2011; McChesney, 2004; Mosco, 2009; Picard, 2011).

The findings indicate that access to data and official sources was one factor shaping the depth of coverage. When official information was insufficient, the newsroom could not immediately publish a full report. One informant stated:

"No one prohibited us from writing, but we knew how far we had to be careful. Moreover, the PIK 2 issue involved many parties and major interests. It does not mean journalists cannot be critical, but every piece of information written must be strongly supported by data" (Informant 4, interview, December 11, 2025).

This statement shows that external pressure does not always take the form of explicit prohibition. Pressure can operate as an editorial awareness of risk. In the context of local media, such risks may relate to legal consequences, institutional relations, the media's business position, and journalists' safety in the field. Thus, soft pressure does not eliminate the media's critical function, but it influences how criticism is formulated, when news is published, what diction is used, and how far an issue is pursued.

This risk calculation shows that PIK 2 coverage existed within a negotiated space. Local media still had room to exercise their social control function, but this space was constrained by the surrounding political, economic, and institutional configuration. Therefore, local media criticism did not disappear. It appeared in a more measured, gradual, and data-based form.

4.5 Ideological Level: Negotiating Development Narratives and the Voices of Affected Communities

At the ideological level, the findings show that PIK 2 coverage was situated within a tension between developmentalist narratives and the media's social control function. As a large-scale project, PIK 2 carries narratives of investment, economic growth, regional development, and modernization. These narratives are strong because they are supported by state and corporate actors with political-economic authority. However, local media did not fully reproduce these narratives in a singular manner. Banten Pos and Radar Banten continued to provide space for the voices of fishers, coastal residents, and affected communities.

Within the Hol framework, ideology represents the broadest level of influence because it relates to dominant values that shape how the media interpret social reality (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). In the context of development, developmentalist ideology tends to position investment, infrastructure, modernization, and economic growth as the main indicators of progress (Harvey, 2005; McMichael, 2017). The media may reproduce this ideology when coverage emphasizes the economic benefits of a project. However, the media may also negotiate dominant ideology by bringing forward issues of spatial justice, social impact, and environmental sustainability (Hall, 1980; Servaes, 2008).

One informant stated that the media's position was not to reject development, but to monitor its impacts:

"We are not anti-development. But if development creates social or environmental problems, that is what we must raise. That is our position. Development remains important, but the media also have a responsibility to look at its impact on society. If residents, fishers, or the environment are affected, that should not be ignored in the coverage" (Informant 1, interview, December 19, 2025).

This statement shows that local media adopted a critical-proportional position. The media did not reject development as an idea, but rejected the tendency to narrate development only in terms of investment and economic growth while overlooking its impacts on communities. This position reflects ideological negotiation within the newsroom.

The media's social control function was carried out by providing space for affected groups. In dominant development narratives, fishers and coastal communities are often positioned as objects of development. Through news coverage, local media sought to position them as subjects with experiences, grievances, and interests. In this sense, PIK 2 coverage was not only about the project itself, but also about who was given space to speak and how development was understood in the everyday lives of coastal communities.

4.6 Synthesis of Discussion

Based on the five levels of the Hierarchy of Influences, the production of PIK 2 news in Banten Pos and Radar Banten can be understood as a layered and negotiated process. At the individual level, journalists' experience and social proximity to coastal issues shaped their sensitivity to the impacts of development. At the level of media routines, deadline pressures and limited resources made in-depth coverage develop gradually. At the organizational level, editors and editors-in-chief carried out gatekeeping to maintain accuracy, balance, and institutional security. At the extra-media level, pressures from local government, developers, economic relations, access to information, and legal risks appeared as soft pressure that encouraged risk calculation. At the ideological level, local media negotiated with developmentalist discourse while continuing to provide space for the voices of affected communities.

These findings show that local media were neither fully subordinate to dominant development narratives nor entirely free from structural pressure. The social control function continued to operate, but through editorial strategies that were cautious, gradual, and data-based. Thus, the main contribution of this study is to show that local journalism practices in strategic development issues cannot be understood only through textual analysis of news. News production needs to be read as the result of the interaction between journalists' agency, newsroom routines, organizational structures, external pressures, and development ideology.

This study also extends the use of the Hierarchy of Influences theory in the context of local media and coastal development conflicts. The novelty of the study lies in the finding that proximity, or local closeness, does not operate only as a news value at the individual level, but moves across the entire news production process. Closeness to affected communities shapes journalists' sensitivity, influences newsroom decisions to follow issues continuously, encourages media organizations to consider social impacts, and strengthens the media's position in negotiating development narratives with the public interest. In the context of PIK 2, local media become an important space where journalistic idealism, public interests, and political-economic pressures intersect.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the production of news on the Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) project in Banten Pos and Radar Banten did not take place as a neutral or straightforward journalistic process. Rather, it was shaped by the interaction of multiple layers of influence, as explained in the Hierarchy of Influences (HoI) framework. At the individual level, journalists' professional experience, geographical proximity, and social connectedness to coastal issues played an important role in shaping journalistic sensitivity toward the problems faced by fishers, community living spaces, and environmental impacts. This proximity encouraged journalists to view PIK 2 not merely as a development project, but also as a public issue closely related to the interests of affected communities.

At the level of media routines, PIK 2 coverage reflected a negotiation between the demand for rapid daily news production and the need for investigative depth. Deadline pressures, limited resources, and the working rhythm of local media meant that in-depth reporting did not always appear in a single comprehensive report. Instead, it was developed gradually through daily news stories, further confirmation, and continuous issue development. This condition shows that media routines may limit the depth of reporting, but they do not completely eliminate the critical space of local media.

At the organizational level, gatekeeping mechanisms carried out by editors and editors-in-chief functioned as spaces of selection, quality control, and risk mitigation. In a sensitive issue such as PIK 2, editing and editorial decision-making processes did not only consider news values. They also involved data accuracy, source balance, diction, legal risks, and potential social impacts. In this sense, the media organization became a space of negotiation between journalistic idealism, public interest, institutional caution, and external pressure.

At the extra-media level, pressure on local media did not always appear in the form of open censorship or direct intervention. External influence operated more often through soft pressure, such as limited access to information, institutional relations with local governments, relationships with economic actors, legal risks, and calculations related to the sustainability of media institutions. Such pressure did not entirely stop the media's social control function, but it shaped how criticism was formulated, when news was published, how intense the coverage became, and how newsrooms managed sensitive issues.

At the ideological level, Banten Pos and Radar Banten did not fully reproduce the developmentalist narrative that emphasizes investment, modernization, and economic growth. Both media outlets continued to negotiate the development narrative by bringing forward the voices of fishers, coastal communities, and affected groups. This position shows that local media were not anti-development. Rather, they carried out a critical function by placing development within the framework of public interest, spatial justice, and environmental sustainability.

Overall, this study affirms that local journalism practices in the coverage of PIK 2 are situated between professional idealism, the media's social control function, and political-economic structural constraints. The main contribution of this study lies in its explanation that local proximity does not operate only as a news value, but also serves as the basis of social sensitivity that shapes issue selection, source selection, news angles, and the continuity of coverage. Thus, local media in Banten

continue to play a strategic role as a space for articulating public interests, even though their critical function must constantly be negotiated within local structures of power and political-economic pressure.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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